



NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Approves Resource Management Plan for San Juan Basin

FARMINGTON — The Bureau of Land Management has signed a Record of Decision (ROD) approving a revised Resource Management Plan for the San Juan Basin in New Mexico. The ROD identifies decisions that will guide management of 1.8 million acres of federal public land and 3 million acres of federally owned mineral estate administered by the Farmington Field Office plus oil and gas development on the portion of the San Juan Basin administered by the Albuquerque Field Office.

The plan decisions address five key issues: oil and gas leasing and development, land ownership adjustments, off-highway vehicle use, specially designated areas, and coal leasing suitability. The plan does not approve individual projects, but provides overall guidance to direct management of public lands and minerals.

Virtually all of the Basin with high potential for oil and gas development has already been leased by the BLM. Major decisions include allowing continued development of approximately 2.6 million acres of public land for oil and gas, including federally owned minerals beneath non-federal lands. Other decisions include the placement of seasonal timing restrictions on development in 483,807 acres of important deer and elk wintering habitat. It makes 340,118 acres of BLM-managed land available for sale or exchange while proposing acquisition of 178,237 acres, to consolidate public land holdings and make other areas available for urban expansion.

Thirteen Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV) management units are created and the bulk of the planning area will limit OHVs to maintained roads, designated trails and other areas considered suitable for cross-country travel. A total of 137 areas encompassing 649,901 acres are designated for special management prescriptions, including a requirement for directional drilling for recovery of natural gas under Negro Canyon to protect semi-primitive recreational opportunities and wildlife resources.



www.nm.blm.gov

The ROD also commits the BLM to continue support of air quality monitoring, modeling, and future mitigation of emissions from natural gas compressors. It also implements a policy to reduce noise impacts from compressors.

“The Record of Decision provides for an environmentally responsible approach to natural gas and oil development, while meeting the President’s National Energy Plan goals,” said Steve Henke, manager of the BLM’s Farmington Field Office. “We will continue to require site-specific environmental analysis and reviews to ensure all projects comply with existing laws and policy before any permit decisions are made.”

The revised RMP also outlines a series of mitigation measures designed to minimize the environmental impacts related to oil and gas development, Henke added.

The signing of the ROD is the culmination of a planning process that began in September 2000. A Draft Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement were released for public review and comment on June 28, 2002. Public comments were then incorporated into a Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement that was distributed on April 4, 2003.

The ROD is available online at www.nm.blm.gov or the public can call the Farmington Field Office at (505) 599-8900 to reserve a printed copy (hard copies of the document will be available within 10 days of this date).

The BLM manages 13.4 million acres of public land in New Mexico, and 47 million acres of federally owned mineral estate. The agency manages public lands and resources to sustain their health, diversity and productivity for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

